

CAPE MAY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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Established 1953

Leslie L. Gimeno, PP, AICP

Planning Director

Cape May County Planning Board Minutes of the Meeting of March 19th, 2015 5:00 P.M., Intermediate Meeting Room County Administration Building 4 Moore Road Cape May Court House, New Jersey 08210

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm by Chairperson Boeshe; she subsequently read the public meeting notice.

Following the flag salute, roll call was taken with the following members being present:

Member	Present	Absent
Ms. Boeshe	x	
Mr. Foster	x	
Mr. Humphries	x	
Mr. Morey		x
Mr. Rixey	X	
Mr. Thornton	x	
Mr. Ashman	x	
Mr. Young	x	

Others in Attendance:

Leslie Gimeno, PP, AICP, County Planning Director
Katelynn Wintz, Senior Planning Aide

Minutes of September 18th:

Mr. Humphries made a motion to adopt the minutes, as written. Mr. Rixey seconded the motion. All in favor.

Correspondence:

Ms. Gimeno said that there was no correspondence.

Director's Report:

Ms. Gimeno reported that she had attended the County Chamber of Commerce's Monthly Business meeting today, and that Mr. Thornton had been the guest speaker, delivering a "State of the County" address. Mr. Thornton provided a recap of his talk, which included overviews of the County government's activities and challenges with maintaining an aging transportation infrastructure. He mentioned that the County Technical High School was celebrating its 100th birthday and described how that institution was founded by a group of individuals from throughout the County who wanted to provide a centralized location to teach trade skills. He also described the County's budget, which was delivered under the 2% cap, with the County being successful in having the lowest tax rate in the State.

Ms. Gimeno then discussed an article entitled "Welcome to Beer Country", which was published in the February 2015 edition of Planning Magazine, the official publication of the American Planning Association. She said that the article recognized and described the relationship of the craft beer industry and economic development, providing several specific examples from across the country. The article described the growth of the industry from "zero" breweries during Prohibition to 250 in 1990, to 1,500 in 2008. By 2013, that number had almost doubled (2,822), with another 2,000 breweries in the planning phases (Brewer's Association). The dynamic growth in the industry also facilitated a tremendous economic impact, with craft beer contributing \$4.7 billion to California's economy, \$2.3 billion in Texas, \$2.2 billion in New York, and \$2.0 billion in Pennsylvania. She said a "fun fact" was that according to the article, most of the breweries were located in industrial zones which have lower rents, no neighbors, and "strong floors" that were capable of supporting the weight of the equipment.

Ms. Gimeno said that there is a local success story, the Cape May Brewing Company, which was established at the Cape May County Airport in July, 2011. At that time, there were 2 employees, who made batches of 1 variety of beer in 12-gallon batches. Recently, the brewery made a \$500,000 investment and has moved into a larger location at the CMC Airport. They have 15,000 gallon capacity now, and sell their 75+ varieties to over 120 bars in New Jersey and an additional 50 bars in Pennsylvania. They are on their way to becoming one of NJ's largest craft beer producers. Ms. Gimeno said that they use local products (i.e. honey) and crops in their beers and name their varieties after local customs and landmarks. As examples, she used "Coastal Evacuation IPA" and "Tower 23" German Wheat. Ms. Gimeno said that the use of local products was also seen at our local wineries, and that the distilleries that are coming online are also looking to do the same. Mr. Thornton gave the example of beech plums, and said that the wine industry in Cape May County will have a huge impact. He said that our great climate and soil enable our vineyards to produce high quality products. The discussion was rounded out by Ms. Gimeno stating that the success of Cape May Brewing Company happened in spite of the highly regulated nature of the industry in the State, which does not allow any live music, televisions, or food to be served in the brewing facility. She said that creative solutions such as off-site festivals and food trucks compensate for that, and Mr. Ashman remarked that the Brewery's Oktoberfest is a good example of this.

In other matters, Ms. Gimeno said that there is a volunteer "Adopt a Road" cleanup scheduled for Sunday (3/22) at the Two-Mile Unit of the Cape May National Wildlife

Refuge in Lower Township. She said that Jeff Brennan, our local Watershed Ambassador, was helping to organize the event and the Clean Communities Program run by Nancy Mauro in the Office of the County Engineer had provided the equipment and materials needed for the event (i.e. vests, grabbers, gloves, etc.).

Ms. Gimeno said that officials from the NJDEP had reached out to her and to Dale's Office to request a meeting to brief the County on the status of the Water Supply issue. She provided a brief overview of the findings of the Cape May County Water Supply Study, which identified a potential water supply problem for the southern portion of the County. She said that several potential options for remediating this problem had been proposed as part of follow-up to the Study, but at the time, there were no cost estimates available. The NJDEP had been working with the affected municipalities and water purveyors, and a status update will be provided. Ms. Gimeno indicated her preference that all local municipalities be invited to the meeting, since the role of the County is to serve as a facilitator. Any decisions on the issue would be left to the NJDEP and the local municipalities. The meeting date has not yet been set, but it will likely be during the month of April.

Development Review Committee Summary:

Ms. Gimeno introduced Katelynn Wintz and asked her to provide an overview of the report that she had authored, "Proposed Development Activity 2014". Ms. Wintz said that the purpose of the report was to provide data on the subdivisions and site plans reviewed by the County Planning Board during 2014. The overall number of plans had increased slightly in 2014, but were still moderate compared to peak years of the early 2000's. She stated that the majority of non-residential proposals were related to mixed use projects. In general, she characterized the overall trends as being positive with regard to the economy. Ms. Gimeno said that many of the projects reviewed by the Development Review Committee were redevelopment projects, and the mixed use developments were spurred by changes in local zoning laws in municipalities that were seeking to expand the uses in their downtowns. Ms. Gimeno thanked Ms. Wintz for her work and her presentation.

Old Business:

Water Quality Management Plan Update: Ms. Gimeno reported that she and Mr. O'Connor, along with our consultants, had met with our new WQMP representatives in the Bureau of Water Resources in Trenton on 2/19. The purpose of the meeting was to provide NJDEP with a status report on the project and to develop a path forward. In a follow-up call today, Ms. Gimeno said that NJDEP hopes to be able to provide the requested \$20,000 in funding to complete the project in the near term, while the existing regulations are still in place. New regulations are currently under development and are expected to be released in May, with a targeted adoption of January 2016. If the WQMP is not in place by that point, there is a possibility that we will be required to comply with the new regulations. Ms. Gimeno said that the best solution is for the NJDEP to provide

the funding to allow us to move forward quickly to get the plan adopted. If we are successful, it will be 10 years before another plan is due.

Strategic Planning Recovery Report: Ms. Gimeno indicated that the State had approved the work plan for the project and that we are moving ahead. At the present time, Ms. Wintz is helping to collect data for “repetitive loss properties” which will lead to the identification of targeted areas in need of further study and development of strategies for enhancing resiliency. Once the report is complete and accepted by the State, we can move forward with the rewrite of the County Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Thornton commented that the Green Creek area would likely be identified as a vulnerable area due to frequent flooding, and asked if any work would be done there. Ms. Gimeno said that the County was the recipient of a \$200,000 planning grant from the NJDEP for a study of the Bayshore Dune ecosystem and how to make it more resilient. She noted that Mr. O’Connor in her office was the point person on this project.

Economic Development Updates: Cape May County has been designated as a “Coast Guard Community” by Congress and the USCG, which is a tremendous honor. The designation was recently included in an article in NJ Association of Counties e-newsletter, a copy of which was included in Board Members’ packets. In celebration of this, a Coast Guard Community Festival will be held on May 8th to 10th. Ms. Gimeno said that the Festival is a series of great events being put together by a Committee led by Freeholder Morey and Mayor Mahaney, with participation from several County departments, the County Chamber of Commerce, the DRBA, the Commercial Fishing Industry, and others. She referred the Board to two site plans, which were created by Jason Downie of the Planning Department on the GIS system. These plans will not only help with the Festival planning, but also event management during the events. Friday evening events will include an on-base Proclamation Ceremony, followed by a ticketed dinner event. Saturday will have a family festival with base tours, BBQ, and harbor tours which will include a stop at a commercial fishing dock. Saturday evening will be a family movie event and open house at Cape May Convention Hall. The celebration will conclude at the Ferry Terminal on Sunday with a breakfast and garden festival. Mr. Thornton reiterated what a great honor the designation is, and how the relationship between the USCG and the municipalities has gotten statewide recognition via the New Jersey Association of Counties, which will also be promoting the announcement to the National Association of Counties. Ms. Gimeno encouraged all Board members to mark their calendars and join in the celebration. In response to a question from Mr. Young, Ms. Gimeno confirmed that the Festival will be an annual event. Mr. Thornton added that the County was forming a non-profit Festival Foundation to provide ongoing structure and support for the initiative.

Ms. Gimeno mentioned that the Planning and Engineering Departments have been active in working with the Delaware River and Bay Authority on a variety of issues related to the Cape May County Airport. The group is working on developing a Master Plan for the property that will help guide development and redevelopment activities in an organized

manner, grouping compatible uses together in particular locations. Another potential partner in the initiative is the New Jersey Institute of Technology, which has developed a specialization in resiliency planning. Ms. Gimeno said that she is working with Carole Mattessich to explore the possibility of hosting a design studio at the airport for NJIT graduate students to get a “fresh set of eyes” on the site and draft planning documents. Once the Plan has been further developed, Ms. Gimeno said that she would provide it to the Board.

Mr. Thornton asked about NJDEP regulations and their impact on the site. Mr. Foster said that although the airport is exempt from CAFRA, wetlands regulations still must be met. He explained that wetlands impact the Northeast corner of the airport; this is an area that the DRBA has targeted for potential airside development. While settlement negotiations are taking place to resolve wetlands buffer issues, the NJDEP is not allowing any activities that require a permit (i.e. clearing of obstructions in runways and adjacent areas) to go through. To help expedite the resolution of the problem, Freeholder Morey has asked the Lt. Governor and the “Red Tape Task Force” to get involved. A conference call with all involved parties is scheduled for next week. Mr. Thornton said that we will collectively fight to preserve the development potential at the site.

Transportation Comments:

Mr. Foster said that the Transportation Trust Fund continues to be in jeopardy, with projected cuts in programs resulting. This would impact our County projects in that we typically use the \$1.6 million in TTF funds as down payments on bonds for our local road and bridge payments. Losing these funds would have a very large impact. The Federal Transportation Trust Fund will run out of money in May, which will also affect the County in that we have used this funding for several multi-million dollar projects including Sea Isle Boulevard.

The Sea Isle Boulevard project is slightly behind, but Mr. Foster is hopeful that the fill work will be done by the end of April. Once in place, the fill will sit for 1-2 years during which time 8-12” of settlement is expected. Benchmarks are in place to monitor the settling. Mr. Foster said that they are working on staging and timing for the project, and the worst case scenario for completion is 2020.

Mr. Foster said that federal funding is in place for concept development for the Middle Thorofare Bridge in Lower Township. The purpose of the project is to research possible scenarios for replacement, and it is drawing interest from a large number of big engineering firms.

An adjustment to the County’s Transportation Improvement Program will likely be needed to move the Rio Grande Avenue project in Wildwood to a future funding year. Corson Tavern Road will be moved into a closer timeframe, as this multi-phase project is in a higher state of readiness. It is possible that if everything goes as planned, construction can begin in October. Mr. Young asked what the scope was for the Rio Grande Avenue Project. Mr. Foster replied that the roadway from the foot of the bridge to Park Avenue will be widened, raised, and streetscaping would be installed.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Adjournment:

At 6:16, Mr. Thornton made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Rixey seconded the motion. All in favor.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 21st at 5:00 pm.